UNITED
NATIONS

S

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/25996/Add.3
1 September 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

AN AGENDA FOR PEACE: PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY, PEACEMAKING AND PEACE-KEEPING

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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REPLIES RECEIVED FROM INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVING RECEIVED A STANDING INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SESSIONS AND THE WORK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AS OBSERVERS

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[Original: English]

[26 August 1993]

1. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) welcomes this important and timely initiative of the Security Council of the United Nations to further promote the involvement of regional arrangements and organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is to be noted that the initiative happily coincides with the recent adoption by the 29th Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of OAU, held at Cairo, Egypt, from 28 to 30 June 1993, of the historic Declaration on the Establishment of a Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (hereinafter referred to as "the Mechanism"). But before elaborating on the objectives and operational aspects of this Mechanism, it is important to provide a brief background to OAU's earlier efforts in tackling conflicts within and among its member States.

2. One of the major concerns and preoccupations of the Founding Fathers of OAU, and indeed the leaders of Africa, was, and has been, the management and resolution of conflicts in Africa, and the question of setting up appropriate machinery for this purpose, as stipulated in articles 3 and 19 of the OAU Charter. To this end, a Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration was set up as the official organ charged with the responsibility of peaceful settlement of disputes among member States. But this organ never became fully operational.

3. Accordingly, a range of ad hoc committees with a variety of appellations and different mandates, and applying diverse procedures, was established over the years by the policy-making organs of OAU to deal specifically with inter-State disputes and conflicts. Additionally, mediation on conflicts and disputes among member States was handled through the good offices of African heads of State and Government as well as elder statesmen whose personal prestige, influence and diplomatic skills were brought to bear on the parties to the dispute.

4. These ad hoc arrangements, though with certain limitations, had a positive impact on stabilizing conflict situations among member States. But in order for OAU to deal more effectively with the current conflict situations, most of which are intra-State, it has become of the utmost importance and urgency for the Organization not only to examine the genesis of conflicts obtaining on the continent but also, and more significantly, to review in a more realistic manner the previous arrangements that had been set up to deal with African conflicts.

5. Accordingly, on the proposal of the Secretary-General and following consultations among member States, the 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government that took place at Dakar, Senegal, in June/July 1992 adopted in principle, the establishment of the Mechanism. As already pointed out, the creation of the said Mechanism was formally endorsed by the Cairo Summit held in June this year.

6. The establishment of the Mechanism is the logical evolution of OAU's preoccupation with conflicts which was given expression by the Declaration of

the Heads of State and Government, adopted in July 1990, on the "political and socio-economic situation in Africa and the fundamental changes taking place in the world". 1/ In that Declaration, the Heads of State "renew(ed)" their "determination to work together towards the peaceful and speedy resolution of all the conflicts" in Africa - both internal and inter-State - which resolution they stated would be "conducive to the creation of peace and stability in the continent" and would "also have the effect of reducing expenditures on defence and security, thus releasing additional resources for socio-economic development"; for they recognized that it is "only through the creation of stable conditions that Africa can fully harness its human and material resources and direct them to development". 2/

7. Thus, in response to the request contained in the President's statement on "ways and means to strengthen the regional arrangements and organizations in order to better maintain international peace and security", it may be noted that the Mechanism, as provided for by the Declaration establishing it, has the following structure:

(a) It is built around a Central Organ composed of the States which are members of the Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the State of the outgoing Chairman and, where known, that of the incoming Chairman, with the Secretary-General and the Secretariat as its operational arm. The Central Organ assumes the overall direction and coordination of the activities of the Mechanism, in between Ordinary Sessions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, and functions at the level of the heads of State and minister as well as that of ambassadors accredited to OAU or duly authorized representatives;

(b) Further, the Secretary-General, under the authority of the Central Organ, and in consultation with the parties involved in the conflict, is mandated to deploy efforts and take all appropriate initiatives to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. To this end, the Secretary-General relies upon the human and material resources available at the General Secretariat. In his efforts, the Secretary-General may, in consultation with the authorities of their countries of origin, and relying heavily on their cumulative experience and deep-seated knowledge of the African historical, socio-economic and cultural condition, also resort to the use of eminent African personalities. Where necessary, he may make use of other relevant expertise, send special envoys or special representatives as well as dispatch fact-finding missions to conflict areas;

(c) In addition, within the content of the Mechanism, OAU is expected to closely coordinate its activities with African regional and subregional organizations, and cooperate, as appropriate, with neighbouring countries with respect to conflicts arising in the different subregions of the continent, it being understood that these regional organizations and countries are more familiar with the local issues within the subregion in question;

(d) Similarly, OAU cooperates and works closely with the United Nations, not only with regard to issues relating to peacemaking, but, and especially, also those relating to peace-keeping. In like manner, the Secretary-General of OAU maintains close cooperation with other international organizations;

(e) Finally, a special Fund, governed by the relevant OAU Financial Rules and Regulations, is to be established for the purpose of providing financial resources to support exclusively OAU operational activities relating to conflict management and resolution. It will be made up of financial voluntary contributions from member States as well as from other sources within Africa. The Secretary-General may, with the consent of the Central Organ, and in conformity with the principles and objectives of the OAU Charter, also accept voluntary contributions from sources outside Africa.

8. With the establishment of the Mechanism, OAU's capacity to deal with conflicts in Africa will undoubtedly be strengthened, so that it is capable to make an effective contribution to the cause of international peace and security. In the performance of this important function, the role of OAU will encompass such areas as preventive diplomacy, including fact-finding, confidence-building, good offices, peacemaking and peace building. As already indicated, the Mechanism will have as its "primary objective" the "anticipation and prevention of conflicts"; but that "where conflicts have occurred, it will be its responsibility to undertake peacemaking and peace-building functions in order to facilitate the resolution of these conflicts".

9. Mention may also be made at this point of the fact that OAU, at the invitation of the authorities concerned, has also been involved in election monitoring with the objective of assisting member States concerned in the peaceful management of change and in the building of democratic cultures and institutions capable of diffusing tensions arising form rival political groups. In this respect, OAU has, since 1990, monitored or observed no less than 20 presidential and parliamentary elections/referendums within member States.

10. As regards the President's statement on "ways and means to further improve coordination of their efforts with those of the United Nations", it is to be recalled that cooperation between OAU and the United Nations in all fields, including peace and security, has existed since the establishment of OAU in 1963. Indeed, the OAU Charter stipulates in article 2 one of the purposes for its establishment as the promotion of "international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". Such cooperation derives its existence not only from the complementarity between the purposes and principles of the two organizations but also, on the basis of a number of resolutions and decisions adopted by the respective legislative organs of both organizations. In this connection, special reference may be made to the Cooperation Agreement concluded on 9 October 1990, which provided for mutual cooperation in all fields: political, economic and social, scientific and cultural.

11. It is the understanding of OAU that the coordination of the efforts of regional organizations with those of the United Nations, in the context of pacific settlement of disputes and the maintenance of international peace and security, as provided for in Article 52 of the Charter of the United Nations, implies that that relationship must be conducted in such a way that the comparative advantage of the regional organization, on the one hand, and that of the United Nations on the other hand, optimally come into play. Thus, though OAU recognizes that the United Nations, being the World Body, has the primary responsibility for international peace and security, and that it is endowed with greater material and financial resources, OAU brings to such a partnership, its

political salience as the pre-eminent, continent-wide regional organization in Africa, deriving from its proximity to and better knowledge of local African conflict situations, the shared historical experience and culture of its member States and the political will to resolve its own problems.

12. A review of recent developments in Africa clearly demonstrates that the respective roles of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations have been complementary and mutually reinforcing. To this end special reference may be made to the successful mediation efforts relating to the Liberian conflict jointly conducted by the two organizations through the OAU Eminent Person and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, together with the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS), whose collective efforts culminated in the signing of a Peace Agreement for Liberia, at Cotonou, Benin, on 25 July 1993, by the parties concerned. In the case of Rwanda, there is the prospect of the setting up of a neutral international force by the United Nations to implement the Arusha Peace Agreement on Rwanda. Such a Force will be replacing the OAU Neutral Military Observer Group (NMOG II). As regards Somalia, the OAU has fully cooperated with the United Nations in the efforts to bring about an end to the conflict and, in particular, in support of the process of national reconciliation.

13. Indeed, on this issue of coordination, it is pertinent to note that the Mechanism requires OAU to cooperate and work closely with the United Nations not only with regard to issues relating to peacemaking but, and especially, also those relating to peace-keeping. Further, where necessary, recourse could be had to the United Nations to provide the necessary financial, logistical and military support for OAU's activities relating thereto, in keeping with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations on international peace and security.

14. With regard to the President's statement concerning the "timely and specific request for United Nations involvement", as well as the "readiness to provide resources", it is to be noted that though OAU is short of logistical, material and financial resources, it is well disposed to providing, through its member States, human resources for peace-keeping operations in Africa to add to the efforts deployed by the United Nations.

15. Furthermore, OAU agrees with the President's statement that one of the ways in which cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as OAU, can be improved is through the exchange of information and consultation. This, in fact, is already covered by the present Cooperation Agreement between the two organizations, as has already been stated. Nevertheless, there is a need to enhance and strengthen the existing pattern of exchange of information and consultations, especially in the area of monitoring and early warning of conflict situations.

16. Finally, attention should be drawn to the need to strengthen OAU's capacity to deal with conflict situations in Africa. In this respect, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in their Declaration on the Mechanism directed the Council of Ministers "... in consultation with the Secretary-General, to examine ways and means in which the capacity within the General Secretariat can be built and brought up to a level commensurate with the magnitude of the tasks at hand

and the responsibilities expected of the Organizations". Clearly, this is an area where the United Nations could, as a matter of priority, consider offering the necessary assistance and support.

Notes

1/ A/45/482, annex III, AHG/Decl.1 (XXVI).

2/ Ibid., para. 11.